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ABSTRACT

This book proposes restructuring the education system using the principles and practices used by successful businesses during the past 15 years of rapid change. It suggests that the skills taught by schools today, even if test scores measure them as improving, are not sufficient for high school graduates in an increasingly-changing, challenging workplace. Instead, six New Basic Skills are proposed: (1) the ability to read at the ninth-grade level or higher; (2) the ability to do math at the ninth-grade level or higher; (3) the ability to solve semistructured problems where hypotheses must be tested; (4) the ability to work in groups with persons of different backgrounds; (5) the ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing; and (6) the ability to use computers to carry out simple tasks such as word processing. The New Basic Skills can be imparted to students by following five principles that are also characteristic of good management in businesses: agree on the problem; provide the right incentives and opportunities; train the frontline workers; measure progress regularly; and persevere and learn from mistakes. Throughout the book, numerous examples are provided of companies requiring the New Basic Skills and schools striving to change in order to raise the achievement of students in attaining these skills. (KC)

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